

REMARKS

Summary of the Amendment

Upon entry of the above amendment, the claims 1-24 will have been canceled and claims 32-48 will have been added. Accordingly, claims 31-48 will be pending with allowed claim 31 being in independent form. Reconsideration of the Office Action and allowance of the present application and all the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

Support For New Claims

Support for new claims 32-48 can be found in original claims 2-24 and Figs. 1-10. Applicant submits that no new matter has been added.

Present Amendment is proper for entry

Applicants respectfully submit that the instant amendment is proper for entry after final rejection. Applicants note that, inasmuch as new claims 32-48 depend from a claim which was indicated to be allowed, no question of new matter is presented nor are any new issues raised in entering the instant amendment of the claims and that no new search or further consideration would be required. Also, no net additional claims have been added. Moreover, Applicants submit that the instant amendment places the application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants request the Examiner to enter the instant amendment, consider the merits of the same, and indicate the allowability of the present application and each of the pending claims.

Allowed Claims

Applicants appreciate the indication that claim 31 is allowed. As new claims 32-48 are dependent from claim 31, Applicants respectfully request that claims 32-48 also be indicated to be allowed. Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance for the following reasons.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Applicant submits that the rejection of claims 1-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,723,541 to SUGII et al. in view of US published patent application 2004/0235264 to FORBES et al. is moot.

By this Amendment, claims 1-24 have been canceled so that the claims which are indicated to be allowed can proceed to issue.

Applicants, however, reiterate that the instant rejection is improper at least for the reasons already made of record.

Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the above-noted claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

CONCLUSION

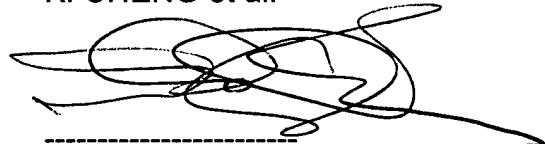
In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that none of the references of record, either taken alone or in any proper combination thereof, anticipate or render obvious the Applicants' invention, as recited in each of the pending claims. The applied references of record have been discussed and distinguished, while significant claimed

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features of the present invention have been pointed out. Further, any amendments to the claims which have been made in this response and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto. Accordingly, reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application and all the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

Authorization is hereby given to refund excess payments and charge any additional fee necessary to have this paper entered to Deposit Account No. 09-0458.

Respectfully submitted,
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